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Massey investigating novel food technology

Monday, 10 October 2016, 1:06 pm
 Press Release: [Massey University](#)

Monday, October 10, 2016



Schematic of the MATS pilot-scale system

Massey investigating novel food technology

Massey University researchers are investigating whether establishing an Innovation Centre focused on a novel food processing technology could transform New Zealand's food industry. The University will host representatives from American-based company 915 Labs, which has commercialised the product, at a workshop on the Manawatū campus tomorrow. They will be joined by more than 50 representatives from major food companies, researchers, scientists and Government at the day-long workshop.

The Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilisation (MATS) and Microwave Assisted Pasturisation (MAPS) technology was originally developed by Washington State University over a 10-year period, funded by the US government and a wide range of food companies. 915 Labs holds the exclusive, worldwide license to the technology.

MATS uses microwaves to speed up the heating process for packaged foods, essentially combining a continuous retort with a microwave. By reducing the cooking time, food quality can be significantly improved without compromising food safety or shelf life. It also provides an extended shelf-life on heat sensitive products like fish and vegetables that previously have adversely affected by thermal treatment.

MAPS is similar to MATS but operates with lower temperatures and shorter heating times required for pasturisation. In the MAPS system, packaged foods and beverages are heated simultaneously with hot water and microwave energy to a temperature of 70-90°C for 2-10 minutes, eliminating viral and bacterial pathogens.

Dr Abby Thompson, Director of Massey's Riddet Innovation, says the technology means products look and taste fresher and retain more sensitive nutritional components, achieving safe food with an extended shelf life.

"This technology enables the development of premium fresh-life foods and meals with enhanced consumer appeal with sufficient shelf life to supply both domestic and export markets with products

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targeting retail, food service and institutional applications. It is a real game changer," Dr Thompson says.

The technology has primarily been developed for human ready meals, but there is also a lot of interest in premium pet foods. "Aroma, flavor and colour are all significantly fresher, and we believe there should be higher protein digestibility due to the reduction in heat exposure. Logic also suggests it should be possible to produce premium products with heat-sensitive bioactives that may otherwise not be feasible with traditional methods," Dr Thompson says.

915 Labs manufactures and sells pilot-scale and commercial-scale MATS systems and will begin producing a MAPS-only system in 2017. Massey University is looking to establish an Innovation Centre for this technology, based at the FoodPilot in Palmerston North. This would be supported by a dedicated team providing food technology, process engineering and regulatory expertise, and would undertake development and validation projects on behalf of the international food industry. The Centre would also enable exciting research collaborations with overseas research groups.

Michael Locatis, chief executive of 915 Labs, says, "We look forward to meeting with members of the New Zealand food industry and experts from Massey University to talk about the future of packaged food and the impact of microwave processing on the quality and nutrition of ready-to-eat and shelf-stable products."

Phil McGrath, chief executive of Food Locomotive Limited is excited by the possible venture. "MATS is a ground breaking technology that enables us to create true clean label products with improved nutrition, texture and flavour for our customers. This exciting new technology allows us to showcase New Zealand's quality produce across the globe. MATS is the value-added opportunity we have been looking for."

Craig Nash, chair of the FoodHQ Commercialisation Stream, is working with Massey University to secure the technology. "Palmerston North is the home of food and beverage innovation in New Zealand. By securing MATS technology we will provide both New Zealand and Manawātū food companies with an edge and help grow our economy."

MATS.docx

MAPS_.docx

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Health: New Zealand's First 'No Sugary Drinks' Logo Unveiled

New Zealand's first "no sugary drinks logo" has been unveiled at an event in Wellington... It will empower communities around New Zealand to lift their health and wellbeing and send a clear message about the damage caused by too much sugar in our diets. [More>>](#)



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- Food and Grocery Council - FIZZ campaigners should change logo, says FGC - Obesity conversation needs to centre on food literacy
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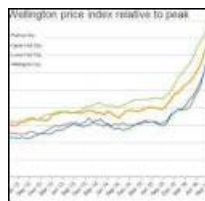
Modern Living: Auckland Development Blowouts Reminiscent Of Run Up To GFC



The collapse of property developments in Auckland is "almost groundhog day" to the run-up of the global financial crisis in 2007/2008 as banks refuse to fund projects due to blowouts in construction and labour costs, says John Kensington, the author of KPMG's Financial Institutions Performance Survey. [More>>](#)

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Onetai Station: Overseas Investment Office Puts Ceol & Muir On Notice



The Overseas Investment Office (OIO) has issued a formal warning to Ceol & Muir and its owners, Argentinian brothers Rafael and Federico Grozovsky, for failing to provide complete and accurate information when they applied to buy Onetai Station in 2013. [More>>](#)

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5. [Forbes.com: Powershop - The eBay of Electricity by Tony Seba](#)
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